

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
STRUCTURE OF MERIT DESIGNATION REPORT
Prepared by Nicole Hernandez, MFA, City Architectural Historian

246 CANON DRIVE
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

Designation Status: Designated a Structure of Merit on May 12, 2021

Assessor Parcel Number: 053-071-001

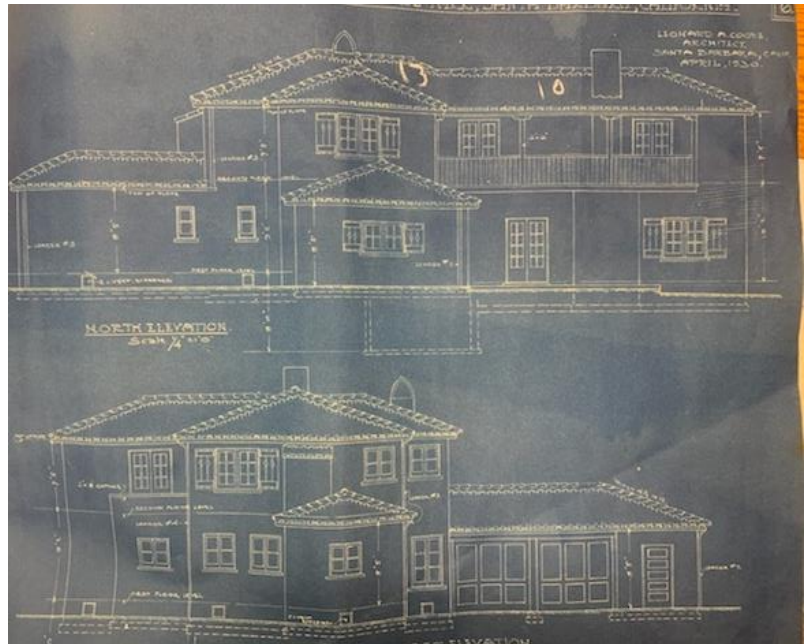
Constructed: 1930

Architect: Leonard A. Cooke, AIA

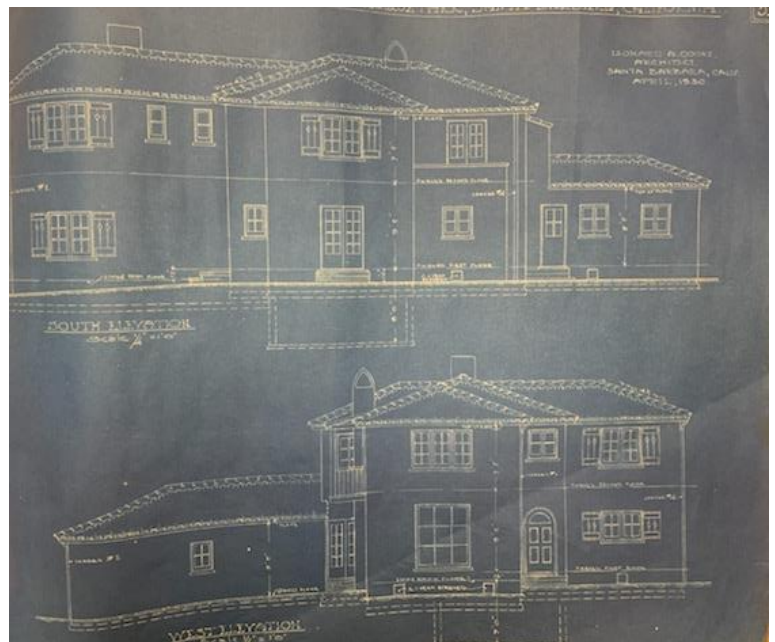
Architectural Style: Spanish Colonial Revival

Property Type: residence

Original Use: Residence



Property Description: This two-story Spanish Colonial Revival style house sits on Canon Drive along with other period revival houses constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. The house features a variety of hipped roof forms covered in terra cotta tiles that contrast to the smooth stucco walls. While the design is mostly Spanish Colonial Revival, there are hints of Monterey Style detailing, this includes the second-floor covered balcony on the north elevation and shutters positioned at most of the second-floor windows. A Monterey Style balcony at the second floor constructed of heavy wood timbers is held by heavy timber posts with carved brackets. The doors under the Monterey balcony are a set of divided light doors. Rectangular, wood casement, horizontally divided and multiple divided light windows carefully puncture the facade.



Significance: The building meets the following criteria outlined in the Santa Barbara Municipal Code 22.22.040:

Historic Integrity

246 Canon Drive is in excellent condition. The house conveys integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling and association by being an example of Spanish Colonial Revival style in Santa Barbara. The house had a one-story addition at the rear of the house in 2001. The original entrance facing Canon Drive was enclosed making the main entrance the path up from Calle Fresno and the entrance under the Monterey balcony the main entrance. The additions are compatible with the house and do not obscure any character defining features of the house.

A. Its character, interest or value as a significant part of the heritage of the City, the State or the Nation;

In 1916, Bertram Goodhue, author of a book on Spanish Colonial architecture, helped to kick-start the new Spanish style with his designs for the Panama California Expo in San Diego. Until then, the only Spanish themed architecture mimicked Mission prototypes. Soon, however, architects and patrons began to look to Spain itself for detailed examples of the Spanish style. Throughout the territories initially settled by the Spanish in the Southwest, as well as Texas and Florida, the Spanish Colonial Revival flourished. Santa Barbara had many architects including George Washington Smith, Lulah Maria Riggs, Winsor Soule, Reginald Johnson, William Edwards, Henry Howell, and Joseph Plunkett talented in designing in the style. Another key to the success of the Spanish Colonial Revival in Santa Barbara was the Plans and Planting Committee through which Bernhard Hoffman and Pearl Chase and others helped to sway Santa Barbara towards a more unified architectural style based on the City's Spanish Colonial and Mexican past. The building qualifies under *criterion A* as an excellent example of original Spanish Colonial Revival style residence designed by noted architect Leonard Cooke that is essential to the identity of Santa Barbara.



Map of 1926 Subdivision

The building sits in the San Roque neighborhood. The San Roque neighborhood was once the Ranch of Dixey Thompson, who raised beans and walnuts on the ranch. Thompson's ranch flanking San Roque Canyon remained open agricultural land until the first subdivisions began developing around World War I. Stephen Rutherford bought 123 acres in 1927 between San Roque Road and Alamar Avenue. The San Roque portion of the ranch was developed in patchwork fashion between the two World Wars. San Roque was half built out by 1940. The rest of the home sites were filled between 1955 and 1965.



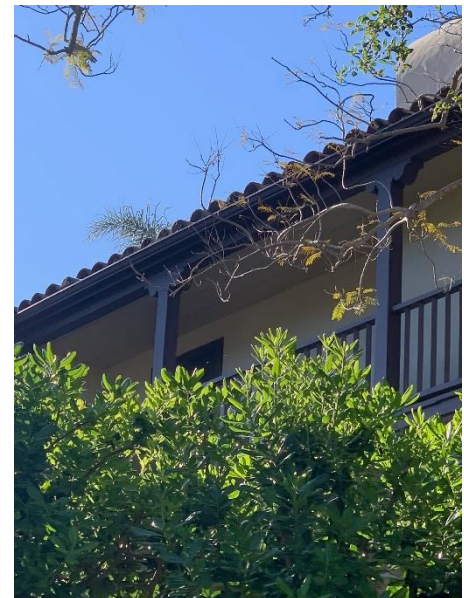
As shown on the 1930-31 Sanborn Map, this house was one of the first few built around Canon Drive. In 1930 this house joined other prominent houses, both designated as Structure of Merit, at 212 Canon Drive designed in 1928 in the Tudor Revival style and 405 Canon Drive designed in 1929 by noted architects Edwards and Plunkett in the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

Sanborn Map 1930-1931 Courtesy
Gledhill Library

The house was built as part of the San Roque county Club, a planned development of homes around Canon Drive with a golf course where Ralph Stevens Park is now. The 1926 subdivision maps show the layout of streets, at least one of which never materialized. The homes were required to meet construction and design standards established by the San Roque Investment Company. A San Roque Art Jury governed all color schemes. As an original 1930 Spanish Colonial Revival style house and a house illustrative of the development of San Roque the house qualifies under criterion A.

Criterion D. Its exemplification of a particular architectural style or way of life important to the City, the State or the Nation:

The Spanish Colonial Revival style emphasized the interplay of cubic volumes, patios, pergolas and verandas; each interpreted and redefined by local architects or regions in their own oeuvre of the form, massing, and decorative treatments.



This structure may qualify under Criterion D due to the following character-defining features:

- **Roof:** The house features various forms of hipped roofs covered in terra-cotta tiles. The tiles are a decorative transition from the roof to the smooth stucco walls.
- **Wall Materials:** The Spanish Colonial Revival style building features smooth, whitewashed, planar, stucco walls, with the emphasis on broad, uninterrupted wall surfaces punctuated by careful use of openings.
- **Balcony Details:** A Monterey Style balcony of heavy timbers and carved brackets at the top of the posts.
- **Chimneys:** Stucco chimneys are tower like elements with decorative openings with that are both practical and ornamental.
- **Window and Door Details:** Rectangular, wood casement, with horizontal divided light windows and a pair of divided light doors under the balcony.



Criterion F. Its identification as the creation, design or work of a person or persons whose effort has significantly influenced the heritage of the City, the State or the Nation: The design is by prominent Santa Barbara Architect, Leonard Austin Cooke, AIA, was born in Birkenhead, England in 1880 and immigrated, possibly for health reasons, to the United States in 1901 after attending architecture school. By 1902, he had landed in Santa Barbara, where he found work as a draftsman with a local architect.



He moved to Pasadena in 1909 for unknown reasons, working as a draftsman for the famed architectural firm of Charles and Henry Greene, where he learned Craftsman Style design. In fact, he became so adept at designing in the Craftsman Style that many of the houses he worked on independently have since been mistaken for the work of the Greene brothers. Around 1910, Cooke launched a private practice in Pasadena, finally receiving his state license to practice architecture in 1915.

Cooke, however, had already returned to England a year earlier in order to sign up with the Royal Lancashires of the British Army. Working in a defense construction capacity, he reported back to America some of his experiences, which were published in a 1916 issue of the *Southwest Builder and Contractor*. He was reported to have been killed in France, but his friends later received a cablegram from him explaining that he was actually recuperating from his wounds in Liverpool, and that he planned to return to the war with the Royal Hussars.

Around this time, Cooke met his future wife in Scotland, and she accompanied him back to Santa Barbara in 1921. They were married that year in Berkeley, California, and had three children. One of their sons, Noel, would go on to form his own architectural practice in Santa Barbara.

Cooke spent the rest of his life in Santa Barbara. He worked in an office inside of the Howard Canfield Building and lived with his family at 2412 Foothill Road before moving to 433 East Victoria Street. He became involved in civic affairs, serving as chairman of the City's planning commission and designing entries for the Tournament of Roses, two of which won sweepstakes prizes. He served as an advisor at nearby Port Hueneme during World War II, and eventually retired from architecture in 1951. Cooke died on October 10th, 1955 at the age of 75.

In Santa Barbara, Cooke designed the Municipal Tennis Courts and many residences, including the George McConnell house in 1927 (*La Muralla*)—named a Better Homes In America Demonstration House—and the J. Langdon Erving home, which cost an incredible \$160,000 to construct in 1930. Other residences he designed in Santa Barbara County can be found around Montecito and Hope Ranch. He also worked on a variety of structures in Altadena and Pasadena, primarily between 1910 and 1912. He was a charter member and former president of the American Institute of Architects. Cooke's popularity as an architect was said to be bolstered by the extent to which he would go out of his way to accommodate his clients' wishes.



G. Its embodiment of elements demonstrating outstanding attention to architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship;

The following character-defining features are found to have outstanding attention to design, detail materials and craftsmanship:

- **Roof:** The house features various forms of hipped roofs covered in terra-cotta tiles. The tiles are a decorative transition from the roof to the smooth stucco walls.

- **Wall Materials:** The Spanish Colonial Revival style building features smooth, whitewashed, planar, stucco walls, with the emphasis on broad, uninterrupted wall surfaces punctuated by careful use of openings.
- **Balcony Details:** A Monterey Style balcony of heavy timbers and carved brackets at the top of the posts.
- **Chimneys:** Stucco chimneys are tower like elements with decorative openings with that are both practical and ornamental.
- **Window and Door Details:** Rectangular, wood casement, with horizontal divided light windows and a pair of divided light doors under the balcony.

Work Cited:

Closson, Richard. *This Old House*. "Ancestors West, Santa Barbara County Genealogy Society" Spring 2020.

Gregory, Tim. "Leonard A. Cooke (Pages 7-9 of '1258 Hillcrest Avenue, Pasadena')." *Building Biographer*, Janice Lee Properties, 2018.

Grumbine, Anthony, Harrison Design. Hernandez, Nicole. *Santa Barbara Style Guides, Spanish Colonial Revival*. City of Santa Barbara, Community Development Department. November 2014.

Thompson, Walker A. *San Roque*. "Neighborhood Series No. 1." Southern Santa Barbara County Board of Realtors. 1977.